Presented to me
at 1928 Grand Parlor N.S.G.W. 50th
at San Francisco upon
my election as Grand Trustee
(3rd term)

A CALIFORNIA TROUBADOUR

BY

CLARENCE THOMAS URMY

AUTHOR OF

A ROSARY OF RHYME
A WREATH OF CALIFORNIA LAUREL
A VINTAGE OF VERSE
UNDER THE TOYON TREE
(IN PREPARATION)

My lute on lifted hands I hold
And pray this prayer:
Tune Thou the strings, let them unfold
Thy mercy, love and care,
And let it now and ever be
An instrument that pleases Thee.

SAN FRANCISCO
A. M. ROBERTSON
1912

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From them to you, how great the span,
When measured by the life of man;

From you to them, how short the space,
When measured by your verses' grace!

Dead are the Lovers, dead each Dame—
Deathless their Songs, enrolled by Fame!

Of Beauty and of Love they sang,
With praise of Love their verses rang,

With praise of Beauty rang their verse,
While Lovers' fealty they rehearse.

And you, in newer word and phrase,
The same sweet themes of olden days,

The worth of Beauty, truth of Love,
Love's faith, all other faith above,

In newer phrase and word you sing,—
The self-same praises of the Spring—

Spring of the World, Spring of the Heart,
That Spring whence springs all truth in Art!

So may some song of yours enshrine
A lambent spark of fire divine,

To kindle newly by your art
The flame of Spring-tide in the heart—

You'll not have lived and loved in vain
If one dead heart shall glow again!

R. H. P.

Sonoma, California,
Christmas Day, Nineteen Hundred and Ten.

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[1]

Come, Troubadours

Troubadours! Come sing again
To the heart of hearts of men;
Come with arms heaped full of roses,
Wreath and garland bright with posies,
For we need your fragrant lays
In these dull and sordid days.

Troubadours! Again to Earth
Bring love-music and love-mirth;
Sing of glance and smile and kisses,
Lover's vow and kindred blisses,
For your arts and wiles we need
In this age of grind and greed.

Troubadours! Fair fellowship,
Sweet of lute and sweet of lip,
Strike the love-cord that entices
With its many rare devices,
For we need love-tunes and rhymes
In these heartless, faithless times.

Troubadours! Come sing once more
Chaunt and *lai* of tender lore;
Come in true, old minstrel fashion,
Heart and tongue aflame with passion,
Bringing from those days afar
Once again "*Le Gai Savoir*"!

[2]

Blondel

Within my heart I long have kept
A little chamber cleanly swept,
Embroidered with a *fleur-de-lis,*
And lintel boughs of redwood tree;
A bed, a book, a crucifix,
Two little copper candlesticks
With tapers ready for the match
The moment I his footfall catch,
That when in thought he comes to me
He straightway at his ease may be.
This guest I love so to allure —
Blondel, King Richard's troubadour!

He often comes, but sings no more
(He says his singing days are o'er!);
Still, sweet of tongue and filled with tales
Of knights and ladies, bowers and vales,
He caps our frugal meal with talk
Of *langue d'oïl* and *langue d'oc,*
Of Picardy and Aquitaine,
Blanche of Castile and Charlemagne,
Of *ménestrel, trouvère, conteur,*
Mime, histrion, and old *harpeur* —
Small wonder that I love him well,
King Richard's troubadour, Blondel!

Still, as he comes at candle-light
And goes before the east is bright,
I have no heart to beg him keep

[3]

Late hour with me when wooed by sleep;
But one request I ever make,
And ever no for answer take:
He will not make the secret mine,
What song he sang at Dürrenstein!
Sleep, troubadour! Enough that thou
With that sweet lay didst keep thy vow
And link thy name by deathless art
With Richard of the Lion Heart!

[4]

Wood-Wind

Hither, Wood-wind, lend thy lips
Where this mountain brooklet slips
Under alder, buckeye, bay,
Oaken bough and willow spray;
Lend thy lips, and let the tone
Be like fairy bugles blown,
Fairy bugles blown afar
In the Land of Evening Star.

Hither, Wood-wind, touch thy tongue
To the flutes with garlands hung;
There are notes that only thou
Canst awake from branch and bough,
Notes that Pan with piping sweet
Charms Terpsichore's light feet,
Or the softer notes that dwell
Deep in Orpheus' golden shell.

Hither, Wood-wind, horns are here,
Elfin horns to woodmen dear,
Hanging at the ivory door
Of each spreading sycamore;
Breathe upon these alder boughs
And thy gentle strains shall rouse
Dreams that in hushed valleys dwell,
Crowned with wreaths of asphodel.

Hither, Wood-wind, thou dost know
Haunt of pebbly piccolo,

[5]

And the cave of clarionet
In the reeds with ripples wet;
There are diapason stops
In the sky-tipped redwood tops;
Blow thereon and we shall hear
Music of a primal year!

Welcome, Wood-wind, at our call;
Or was it the waterfall
Or a falling leaf's low cry
That didst bid thee wander by?
Breathe and blow and drive away
All the care and fret of day,
While the pine trees' soft bassoon
Murmurs magic to the moon.

[6]

The Groves of Pan

Take my hand, and we will stroll
To the foot of yonder knoll,
Down a valley, through a brake,
By a lily-mantled lake,
O'er a meadow Eden-fair,
(Pegasus is pastured there!)
Up a little wooded slope,
Then a wicket gate we ope;
In this dew your finger dip,
And unseen we then shall slip
Down this willow-bowered wynd,
Through this coppice, fir-confined.
Now step softly as you can:
We have reached the Groves of Pan!

Oh, the beauty of the breeze
In the leafy laurel trees,
And the rhymes when down the glade
Branch and bough are zephyr-swayed!
List the rhythmic, quiet call
Of the woodland waterfall,
And the strophe of the streams —
Melody adrift in dreams!
From a covert, cool and dim,
Floats an elfin morning hymn.
Hark! Three nymphs in dalliance met
Trill a tuneful triolet.
Hush! A dryad and a faun
Sing a duo to the dawn.

[7]

Now comes Pan, his syrinx set
To a joyous canzonet,
All his court, a jocund train,
Joining in the glad refrain;
Every insect, bee and bird
In the perfect cadence heard;
Every tree in every grove
Bowing at the name of Jove!
To some sylvan temple bound
Moves the train with choral sound;
On from grove to grove they wend
Till with dusk and dark they blend.

* * * * * *

Let us seek the haunts of man;
Farewell to the Groves of Pan!

[8]

Dreams in the Redwoods

When early stars down twilight pathways rove,
And deep-set, leaf-set canyon streamlets croon
Their canticles unto the crescent moon,
What rare enchantment fills this redwood grove!
Gone is the net of care that Daylight wove,
The toil and weariness of afternoon,
And up from crimson sea and rose lagoon
Night drives her dreams, a misty, drowsy drove.
These redwood dreams! The silver Mission bells,
The footprints of the Padres, fading fast,
The sails adventurous that decked the shore;
Then on and on into the purple past
Where redwood after redwood softly tells
Mysterious tales of immemorial lore!

[9]

Loiterland

Take the road that sharply turns
To the right at Point of Ferns,
Then straight on until you see
On a bough of laurel tree:
Linger Lane, foot-path, no freight;
Traveler, please close the gate.
Ope the portal; lo, you stand
On the edge of Loiterland!

Oh, the song and shade and scent
In one benediction blent,
Here where earth and air are rife
With alluring Eden-life!
Vision vouchsafed but to those
Walking where the sunset rose
Strews its leaves of gold and red
O'er a land with dreams bespread!

Let us first all grief assuage
At the Halcyon Hermitage,
Drinking luscious hydromel
From a sylvan, moss-grown well;
Nothing now our course deters —
Bird and wind for couriers,
Milestones writ in fairy script,
Vocal guide-posts, elfin-lipped!

Shall we wander down this road
To the Vale of Calm Abode,

Or to Fancy's Cottage, caught
In a net of roses wrought?
Where those purple hillocks rise
Honeysuckle Hollow lies,
Close where Sleep her scepter wields
Over Day-dream Poppy-fields.

If you cross this vineyard crest
You will come to Roamer's Rest;
Then 't is but a step or so
To the Drowsy Bungalow;
Clover Croft is just behind
Oaken boughs with moss entwined,
And the inn called Heart's-ease stands
Where the grove and brook clasp hands.

Listen! Was that music? Hark!
Fountains talking in the dark,
In the dark of spruce and fir,
Dreams for their interpreter;
Rills along the roadside run
Seemingly of silver spun,
Spun of silver in whose net
Emerald and sard are set.

Here a canyon, lily-lit,
Stately redwoods arching it,
Woos with stream-sung serenade
On to dimmer, deeper shade;
Winds that down this valley veer
Whisper, "Lotusland is near!"

[11]

Is that ocean, sea or lake
Gleaming through yon bank of brake?

Lo, on Dreamland's coast we stand!
White-sailed ports on every hand;
See, a shallop trimmed with flowers
Waits that we may call it ours!
Let us quickly step aboard,
Sailing softly twilightward,
Seeking o'er celestial seas
Gardens of Hesperides!

[12]

A Jewel Song

Three gems upon a golden chain
I ever keep,
Clasped 'round my neck in joy, in pain,
Awake, asleep.

The red of flame, the green of Spring,
The white of tears
Glow, gleam and sparkle on my string
Of golden years.

The ruby of the Present, bright,
Of value vast,
The Future's emerald, and the white
Pearl of the Past.

[13]

"One Whose Name Was Writ in Water"

(*February 23, 1821*)

"Writ in water"—yea, in all the springs
That bubble into birth with murmurings
Strange, untranslatable, of darks and deeps
Where Lamia her serpent-vigil keeps.

"Writ in water"—yea, in all the brooks
Along whose banks, with bosom-claspèd books,
Rapt poets, young and old, with faces wan
Seek further word of lost Hyperion.

"Writ in water"—yea, in lake and sea
Where e'er the mirrored moon may chance to be,
Fond dreamers find their sweetest solace there
Along the path Endymion made fair.

"Writ in water"—yea, in ocean's breast,
In every azure billow's foam-tipped crest—
In every bubble, ripple, fountain, wave,
Thy name in water written, cheats the grave.

[14]

A California Song

I come to you with a gift in my hand,
A flower that grew in a golden land,
A land on whose head is a poppy crown
And the scent of the blossoms is wafted down
To the amber bay and the topaz sea
And the sun-god's grave by the cocoa tree.

I come to you with a flower whose face
Is the zenith of beauty, the acme of grace;
There are dreams in its eyes, and the song on its lips
Is the lullaby song of the shadow that slips
O'er the tall purple mountain that watches like Fate
The silver sails threading the fair Golden Gate.

I come to you with a flower whose breath
Brings freedom from fear of disaster and death,
For though El Dorado be blackened, and rock
Through the demon of fire and the earthquake shock,
There is peace in the hearts of her children who know
The scent of the fields where the poppies grow.

[15]

A California River

This is the Yuba River, filled with tales
Of camp and cabin, Argonauts and gold,
With dear romance of fir-set mountain trails.

What wondrous legends might thy lips unfold,
If but our eager ears were rightly tuned
To nature's rhapsody by thee outrolled!

And yet thy liquid lyric, rhymed and runed
Among the rocks that guard thy yellow bed,
By echo in my heart is softly crooned,

And seaward on thy bosom, fancy led,
Through canyons calm and cool I downward float
To vales with poppy gardens richly spread,

Still on and on in slumber's dream-set boat,
O'er seas of bygone years, and ever in mine ears
The mellow music of thy golden throat!

[16]

To Bliss Carman

From Vagabondian ports a barque
Sailed up the Sunset Sea,
And just as daylight dawned from dark
A voice called out to me:
"Ho, Brother! May I moor my ark
Here at your Redwood Tree?"

Across the poppy fields I flung
My welcome down the shore;
Oh, how I longed for tuneful tongue,
For lay of Lydian lore,
For harp with strings of silver strung
My greeting to outpour —

"Thrice welcome, Vagabondian Bard,
Thou Modern Mariner,
From haunts with Golden Rowan starred,
Pan Pipes and Dulcimer,
With Gamelbar the battle-scarred —
Hail, Heart's Interpreter!"

* * * * * *

With what delight I backward look
Upon that golden day
When for brief moments one forsook
The Low Tide on Grand Pré,
And bode with me and Bough and Book
In rose-wreathed San José.

[17]

The Trail Beautiful

Here starts the trail —
  This redwood tree —
Walk down the cool
  Dim depths with me;
No need of guide,
  We much prefer
A butterfly
  For courier!
And if the path
  Should prove obscure
We have the brook
  For troubadour
To lead and lure
  With singing sweet
Back to the trail
  Our straying feet.
Is that the wind
  Among the trees,
Or sounding of
  Pacific seas?
Again, again,
  Ah, 't is the sea,
And, troubadour,
  It calls to thee!
Down, down we stray,
  The woods grow dense,
The air is rife
  With frankincense,

[18]

The odor sweet
  Of fir and pine,
For weary hearts
  The anodyne!
Here's eglantine,
  And through the grass
I think I saw
  A pixy pass—
A shadow? No,
  I felt his wings—
Hark! Is it he
  Who softly sings
Far up the hill
  Where purple haze
Hints at the home
  Of sprites and fays?
An upland slope,
  Then down again
Where lilies light
  A dusky glen;
Now straightway out
  Into the sun,
Then into shade
  Where, one by one,
Day-dreams entwine
  A filmy veil
That dims the wood
  And blurs the trail—
    * * * *
Far up the hill

[19]

Is that a star
That beckons us
Afar, afar?
Come! Back along
The trail where now
The moon peers through
Still branch and bough;
Up, up we climb
Unto the crest
That cradles home
And sleep and rest;
Draw, troubadour,
Dreams from the sky,
Trail Beautiful
Good night, good-bye!

[20]

The Sleepless

The woods at night for sleep were fain;
The Wind crept down each leafy lane
And sang a lullaby;
First trunk and branch, then bough and spray,
Then lastly leaf, in slumber lay —
The Wind paused with a sigh.

For Oh, my heart was fain for sleep!
I felt the Wood-wind closer creep
And o'er my pillow stray;
Fear, Pain and Care with peace were filled,
But Memory would not be stilled,
And sobbed till dawn of day.

[21]

Forest Couplets

Beneath a redwood let me lie
And all its harmonies untie:

Melodic sequences of spray
And bough and trunk in rich array;

Chromatic hue and tint and shade
Of beryl, emerald and jade;

Cadenzas, day-dreams that enfold
The *padres,* argonauts and gold;

Soft passing notes, the tones that tell
Of poppy-field and mission bell;

With sea-wind cadences that blow
In dominant arpeggio,

Resolving into chords full blent
Of solace, peace, and calm content.

[22]

Poetry

Call not by name of Poetry the verse
  That neither soothes men's worldly pains and
    cares
  Nor lifts the thoughts of men by golden stairs
To starry thrones; a name so high, so terse,
Should never join a blessing and a curse,
  Nor give to idle songs and vulgar airs
  The christening we give to praise and prayers
That laureled poets on their harps rehearse.

But call by name of Poetry the lines
  That show us stars where scarcely stars belong,
That grow us golden fruit on barren vines,
  That fill deep silences with deeper song,
And grant us glimpses of the worlds that lie
Beyond the reach of human ear and eye.

[23]

Revealment

Let me tell how rhythm with its rime should flow:
As the laugh of leaves when soft zephyrs blow,
As the waves with gracile hand
Write their names upon the sand.

Let me tell how music with its verse should mate:
As the dark with dawn, rapt, inviolate,
As the soil and sun disclose
Sweet communion in a rose.

Let me tell how fancy from the heart should leap:
As the cloud full-fraught rises from the deep,
As the Spring at God's behest
Wakes, and, lo, the world is blest!

[24]

By the Guadaloupe

From happy haunts in hills afar,
  The sparkling water dances,
Attuned to song and gay guitar
  Of olden-day romances.

A *caballero's* serenade,
  A *señorita's* laughter,
With gleams of chillies fair arrayed
  On smoky wall and rafter.

Beneath this turquoise-tinted sky,
  Here in this green pavilion,
At peace with all the world I lie
  Enwrapped in dreams Castilian;

Blue lie the hills of Santa Cruz;
  Low in the sky hangs Hesper;
And Santa Clara's bells diffuse
  The holy balm of vesper.

It falls on dreamful eye and ear,
  Bids care depart and bliss come;
A ghostly *padre* passes near —
  How sweet his "*Pax vobiscum!*"

[25]

"I Lay My Lute Beside Thy Door"

What was it Colin gave to thee? —
A blossom from the hawthorn tree?
A flower of song is all I own,
A little dreamland rose, half blown.
Oh, deck thy tresses, I implore —
I lay my lute beside thy door!

What was it Damon sent to thee? —
A gleaming pearl from Eastern sea?
A gem of song is all I own,
A tiny, glistening, tear-stained stone.
Oh, wear it — 't will my peace restore —
I lay my lute beside thy door!

What was it Lubin brought to thee? —
A falcon from the dewy lea?
A bird of song is all I own,
And to thy heart it now has flown.
Oh, cage it, let it roam no more —
I lay my lute beside thy door!

[26]

Sword, Go Through the Land!

Sword, go through the land and slay
Guile and Hate, Revenge, Dismay!
Now where is such a sword, you say?

Sword, go through the land, but spare
Love and Hope and Peace and Prayer!
Now who, you ask, that sword shall bear?

Sword, go through the land, and youth,
Prime and age shall cry: "Forsooth,
How mighty is the sword called Truth!"

[27]

The Poet-Touch

What is the poet-touch? Ah me, that every
bard might gain it,
And having once attained the prize, forever
might retain it:—
*To touch no thing that's vile, unless to teach
the world to scorn it,*
*To touch no thing that's beautiful, save only
to adorn it!*

[28]

To Ina Coolbrith

Poppy Fields, what shall I say?
"Tell her of our love, alway;
Tell her that our buds unfold
More of grace and more of gold
Since her singing chanced to stray
O'er this land with blossoms gay."

Redwood Groves, what shall I say?
"Tell her of our love, alway;
Of a primal love sincere
Whereby we her name revere,
Teaching it to sprite and fay
And to tender, new-born spray."

Western Winds, what shall I say?
"Tell her of our love, alway;
Tell her how we bear afar
Songs of hers from star to star,
Where they sweep and swing and sway
Till the angels homage pay."

Sun-down Seas, what shall I say?
"Tell her of our love, alway;
Tell how Wave and Shore desire
Speech like that of her fond lyre.
How they fain would learn one lay
That her golden strings convey."

Sunset Skies, what shall I say?
"Tell her of our love, alway;
Tell her of the peace that lies
Far beyond all earthly skies,
Peace that shall be hers for aye
When shall dawn that Perfect Day."

[30]

Friend of Mine

You have bound yourself so closely round my heart,
Friend of mine,
That it seems as if our paths could never part,
Friend of mine!
Oft the vine forsakes the wall,
Stars have e'en been known to fall —
You are not like star or vine,
Friend of mine!

You have played upon the lute-strings of my soul,
Friend of mine,
Singing blissful songs that through my being roll,
Friend of mine;
There are silences somewhere,
Songless lips of mute despair —
Sing for aye your song divine,
Friend of mine!

You have decked my life with roses red as flame,
Friend of mine,
And of Paradise made more than just a name,
Friend of mine;
Flowers fade, their perfume dies,
Visions pass from watching eyes,
But in heaven our roses shine,
Friend of mine!

[31]

A Roundelay

Come, stroll down this lane with me,
Weave a bright chain with me,
And sing a sweet strain with me,
Over and over;
Love's harp is in tune with us,
Now it is June with us,
And joy is triune with us,
Joy, the young rover!

No telling what Time may bring,
What a new rhyme may bring!
For Fate from far clime may bring
Sad call to sever;
The harp may be strung again,
Songs may be sung again,
But we shall be young again —
Never, ah, never!

[32]

Dream-Song

Magic perfume of a rose
That in Allah's garden grows.

Pale, pale light by Cynthia set
Deep in Twilight's coronet.

Angel music, reed and string,
Through the starlight quavering.

Music, perfume, light enshrine
Thee in every dream of mine.

May this little dream-song be
Music, perfume, light to thee!

[33]

The Unattained

Like some rapt Poet, hand-clasped with Desire,
Pacing through dew and dark,
If haply he may learn upon his lyre
The lyric of a lark —

So I, hand-clasped with Dreams, oft-times afar
Through spheres celestial stroll,
If haply I may reach the certain star,
Where dwells Her sainted soul.

[34]

At a Wayside Shrine

Fair shrine of Mary! What sweet lure, I wonder,
Has led me to this leaf-embroidered glen,
As with unfettered feet I sought to sunder
My soul and body from the haunts of men?

I say the sweet "Hail Mary"; never dearer
Have Gabriel's tender words seemed to my soul,
For something in this spot has made them clearer
And marks a golden milestone toward life's goal.

The checkered shine and shade through branches drifting,
The new-born birds that strive so hard to sing,
The "*Pax Vobiscum*" of the breeze uplifting
The tendrils of the baby vines of Spring—

The fair enfoldment of the alders bending
(It was upon a tree His body hung)—
And with it all "*Magnificat*" is blending
By waters of the brooklet sweetly sung.

The sun behind the hill is slowly creeping,
Far up the canyon sounds the Angelus—
Ring on, sweet bell, her memory sacred keeping—
Oh, sweet and blessed Mother, pray for us!

[35]

The Cameo-Cutter

Worker in that most venerable art
So much esteemed in medieval days,
And now brought forth for fresher, brighter bays,
What talismanic dreams must crowd thy heart,
Of brilliant booths in Greek and Roman mart,
Where careful, cunning workmen deftly raise
On jasper, onyx, bloodstone, chrysoprase,
The life and scenes of which they form a part.
O patient lapidary! in the stone
What wondrous arabesques of shine and shade
Abide their time thy tracing to adorn —
Imprisoned beams, perchance, that one day shone
In primal Eden-bower, glen or glade,
Waiting thy touch — their resurrection morn!

[36]

Coronach

"Earth to earth"—then let it be
Something that was dear to me,
Earth whose fond arms guarded well
Some great giant sentinel
That aloft his proud head rears,
Warder of two hemispheres!
Earth from some leaf-littered aisle
Dimly stretching mile on mile
Through dark temples where naught stirs
Save the shy wind-worshipers,
Nymph and dryad, faun and fay,
And a poet, far astray!

"Ashes to ashes"—let it be
Something that was dear to me,
Branch and bough and leaf that made
By the road a pleasant shade;
Manzanita, fir or pine,
Laurel, with its leaf divine.
Build the fire of spruce or oak,
Or of any kindred folk,
Only let the blaze not be
Kindled with the redwood tree;
Sacred be those columns vast
Of the immemorial past!

"Dust to dust"—but let it be
Something that was dear to me,

Dust the *padres'* feet have pressed
Following their high behest,
Where they reared the sainted shrine,
Planted olive grove and vine;
Dust within whose lifted cloud
Fantasies and visions crowd—
Dreams Castilian, dreams of gold,
Tales of Argonauts, untold
Save at night by starlit breeze
To the groves of redwood trees!

Earth from redwood-darkened trail,
Dust from El Camino Real—
Ashes of a mountain tree,
On me let them sprinkled be.

[38]

A Woodland Revel

Hither, Strephon, Chloe, Phyllis,
Corydon and Amaryllis;
Hasten, Lubin and Lysander,
Daphne, Colin, and Sylvander;
Come, Jocunda, Delia, Doris,
Let us dance the merry morris;
Play up, pipers! Bee and cricket,
All ye minstrels of the thicket,
Tune up, strike up to the measure
Of the golden wand of pleasure;
Dance, ye rustics, swain and yokel,
Making all the greenwood vocal,
Filling joy's glad cup completely,
As we sing and foot it featly.

Now what dear delight to wander
While our hearts grow fond and fonder,
Breathing incense, balm, and spices,
Gazing on the fair devices
Arabesqued by shade and shimmer
Through the tree-tops, dim and dimmer;
Up the hill and down the hollow,
Through the paths deer love to follow,
With a bubbling spring for ending
Under redwood boughs low-bending;
Filling fardels with pomander
Of the wildwood oleander;
Laurel-wreaths our boughs entwining,
Love-light in our eyes soft shining!

Shepherds, rest! Ye shepherdesses,
Here are crispy water-cresses,
Ripe-red berries sunlight-basking,
To be had without the asking;
And in high and dim seclusion
Hazel-nuts in rare profusion;
Nectar from a fairy fountain
Hidden in a misty mountain,
Spread in wondrous rich libation
For our ease and delectation.
See, the shadows deeply darting
Bid us sing a song of parting;
Hey for home! Lo, for our guiding
Hesper in the dusk abiding!

[40]

At Santa Cruz

The white cliffs wooed me and I slept
  Within their fond embraces,
Foam-flowers wooed the moon and crept
  From out their crystal vases,
Crept not so near * * * crept not so high * * *
We were alone — the cliffs and I.

The mountain breeze from forest lanes
  Brought echoes, piped and choral,
From dryads hid in dark domains
  Of redwood, fir and laurel —
'T was sweet to hear the drowsy bay
Croon to a Pan-piped virelay!

Calypso called me to her cave
  Adown the shining shingle,
And far beyond the utmost wave
  Where moon and ocean mingle
I heard the Lorelei, and felt
Earth, sea and sky in music melt.

A boat came sailing down the dark
  By some sweet necromancy,
Perchance it was a fairy barque
  Bound for the Isles of Fancy;
I stepped aboard * * * go ask some star
Just where those Ports of Dreamland are!

[41]

Beside the Western Sea

From some faint star I passed to earth,
And here found breath and mortal birth
In land that lies along a reach
Of rock-bound coast and palm-bound beach;
Pass but its golden threshold — lo!
A spell from out the long ago,
Conceived by some strange sorcerer
Who captive binds each voyager;
A landscape bright and Eden-fair,
A mighty magic in the air,
With names that sweetly slide and slip
Across the soft Castilian lip,
And bid the heart-strings gently stir
Like sound of lute and dulcimer —
This was my fortune, born to be
A brother to the Western Sea.

The days unfold — I joy to list
The songs of bard and balladist,
Whose chanting woos me with the wine
That purples peaceful Palestine,
Or weaves in graceful silhouette
Tall tapering tower and minaret;
Or tales of river, lake and sea
Set sapphire-like by hill and lea,
Bestrewn with garden hue and scent
From far-famed bowers of Orient,
And echoed notes from dewy dales

Where moons are wooed by nightingales —
But no, their perfect portraiture
Enchants, but has no power to lure
My faithful heart, content to be
A dweller by the Western Sea.

This my reward — I breathe the air
Blest by Franciscan praise and prayer,
Made holier still by silver swell
From many a dulcet Mission bell;
I have my northern snow-capped peaks,
From whose grand heights fair Nature speaks
To ocean, valley, plain, and calls
Afar to wondrous waterfalls;
I have my skies of sunset gold,
Dream-fields where poppy leaves unfold,
And hammock-swung 'twixt pine and palm
Life runneth as a song-set psalm;
Time drifting goes — each year anew
Still finds me constant, loyal, true,
And more and more content to be
A dreamer by the Western Sea.

[43]

California Skies

California skies!
Balm for the eyes!
Where orange groves or redwoods rise;
By Shasta's snow, Diego's sand
Or old Diablo's dream-set land;
By San Francisco Bay so blue,
Or down some cypress avenue
Near Monterey; by lake Sierra-rimmed,
Or yet afar in valleys vineyard-trimmed;
On plain where Ceres waves her wand,
Or where Pomona fond
And all her train in foothill orchards drowse
Under low-bending boughs—
Look up!
And from the turquoise cup
Drain dreams and rest!
Ah, none so blest
As one who weary of life's endless quest
In this fair meadow poppy-pillowed lies
Day-dreaming 'neath these California skies—
Balm for the eyes!

[44]

In a Cathedral

"The Lord is in His holy temple." I
Through Sentence, Psalter and the Credo stand,
With mind upon the Architect Who planned
These columned walls, this fane so fair, so high;
What graceful arabesques, what wondrous dye
In windows fashioned by a Master-hand,
And where in all the world a nave so grand—
This grove of redwoods reaching to the sky!

Hush! Listen to the Litany of leaves
A-murmur to the breeze that, seaward set,
Is bearing spice from canyons far above;
And now, with sunset-veiling, Twilight weaves
A purple altar-cloth, and lingers yet
The *Nunc Dimittis* of a woodland dove.

[45]

A Casement Canzonet

I know a little window in frame of ivy set,
A tiny cottage casement clasped with emerald amulet;
And looking through this window you see a garden old—
Petunia, dahlia, mullein-pink, and rose and marigold.

But oh, this little window with ivy curtains hung,
I would my sweetest singing might in praise of it be sung!
For, looking through this window, a world of joy is mine—
Dreams, visions, hopes and fantasies, all golden, all divine!

[46]

Mountain Haze

The purple shadow of an angel's wing
  Is flung across the range, and softly creeps
  Adown the mountain-side; the rocky steeps
Are blurred with veils of amethyst that fling
Their filmy folds 'round barren spots that cling
  To jagged slopes; the yawning canyon keeps
  Fond tryst with Dusk, the windless forest sleeps,
With naught save one faint, long line lingering.

So, when the angel-shadow falls on me,
  And from Life's landscape I am blotted out,
    Ne'er to return to my accustomed place,
In Memory's haze let my shortcomings be
  Concealed, forgotten, but may no one doubt
    That I the line of beauty sought to trace.

[47]

Nectar

In a golden bowl I brew
Leaf of rose and violet dew,
And the essences of things
Natal to Pierian springs:
Bird-song, brook-song, breeze a-blow,
Sweets that in dream-gardens grow;
Spray that leaped the harbor bar
Amorous of the twilight star;
Bubbles of delight that float
From a seraph's liquid note;
Bloom from Joy's low-bending bough;
Cupid, drop a kiss — and now,
Sweetheart, here 's a health to thee,
Drink the draught, Sweetheart, with me!

[48]

The Way to the Violet Hills

The guide-posts are a song, a rose,
The star that marks the daylight's close,
The crescent moon, or breeze that blows
From valleys where the dream-flower grows.

Adown the lane of lover's eyes,
On through the gates of glad surprise,
Then up the path of low replies —

Ah, breathe the fragrance Love distils
From out the heart of the Violet Hills!

[49]

The Vanished Voice

You slipped your Mother-hand from mine
And went your way with seraphim,
But in my heart your voice divine
Grew never dumb, grows never dim;
It leads me up the Path of Dreams
That rambles through the Vale of Rhyme,
And on and on by silver streams
That haunt the Hills of Chant and Chime.

Your voice! I hear it in the call
Of woodland wind in redwood boughs,
And in the wild-bird notes that fall
Across the field where poppies drowse;
And all the sweetness to be found
In word or tune my songs among
Is in the dear and dulcet sound
I fain would echo of your tongue!

[50]

An Elfin Skein

A ripple through the redwoods ran,
An echo from a fairy clan
Slipped down the sky;
And suddenly the groves began
To voice a sibylline reply
Caught from the mellow pipes of Pan,
Now far, now nigh.

A Mystery enrobed in mist,
With girdle set with amethyst
And sapphires three,
Came down the hill-path, twilight-kissed,
Crept softly to my trysting tree;
It caught and held me by the wrist,
And spoke to me:

"Tonight the elfin skein is spun;
Ere vigil of the moon is done,
The mesh we wind
Round redwood circles, every one,
And mortals whom therein we bind
Shall at the dawning of the sun
Great gladness find."

I slipped into a redwood ring;
The Mystery took sudden wing,
And down the glade
I heard the fauns and dryads sing
Chant, madrigal and serenade,

And then — it was so strange a thing!
I felt them fade!

* * * * * * *

I woke, sun kissed, and gossamer
Spun by some moonlit messenger
Bedecked my bed;
I hardly dared to breathe or stir,
So deftly was the fiber spread —
I, Fortune's happy prisoner,
Held by a thread!

I must not break the magic spell
Revealing what great joy befell;
But oh, I fain
Would wish that all the world might dwell
One night within that sweet domain,
And wake to love, as I love well,
An elfin skein!

[52]

The Golden Legacy

My mother had no gold to share,
  Nor land, nor herd, nor merchandise —
(My brother has her silken hair,
  My sister has her azure eyes!)
To me she left no comeliness
  That to the form or face belong,
But oh, one gift I do possess,
  The blessed heritage of song!

Long, long ago in cradle days
  Her sweet voice would my heart beguile,
When I could nothing do but gaze
  Into the heaven of her smile!
I learned the songs in later years
  And with her sang them o'er and o'er —
O Memory, thy lute and tears
  Must meet and mingle evermore!

'T was "Hush, my babe," — as fades the light
  I hear her softly, sweetly croon, —
Then "Afton Water," "Stilly Night,"
  "Sanctissima," and "Silver Moon";
She sang them with such tender art,
  The art that only mothers know,
And tied the tunes around my heart,
  Else it had broken long ago!

[53]

To a New Acquaintance

You speak my name and I speak yours, and up
  The curtain goes. What is the play to be—
Like to a draught of nectar, or the cup
  That Hate drains from the deadly upas tree?

You take my hand and I take yours, the song
  Begins, our duo in the scheme of life;
What will the cadence be — full, sweet and strong,
  Or poor and thin, with jar and discord rife?

We look into each other's eyes, a light
  Is born — would we might read on Time's dim scroll
If it be born to flicker for a night,
  Or brighten into Friendship's aureole!

[54]

The Necklace

Hand-clasped with dreams, I sought both far and near
For jewels for the chain;
Hand-clasped with dreams, no task was too severe
Or could my steps detain.

I found one stone within a steadfast star,
Another in a rose,
One lay beneath a deep-set, moaning bar
Where beat a tide of woes.

Some passed to me from out an angel's hand,
Some from a dreamland tree,
And one day, walking in an alien land,
A stranger gave me three!

Close-hidden in a tear-dewed violet
I found a priceless prize;
My fairest gem reflects the love-light set
Within a dear one's eyes.

And now, the jewels burnished, golden-bound,
For me their charm diffuse
In rarest rainbow gleams that glow around
The white throat of my Muse!

[55]

A Lyric for a Lute

Bring the lute at vespertide,
Ope the sunset casement wide,
Let the breath from locust boughs
Blow across our weary brows,
While the daytime's vague unrest
Still shall lie on Evening's breast,
Hushed by tones that softly slip
From thy dulcet lute and lip.

Bring the lute at vespertide,
Let the songs be true and tried,
Olden themes and olden lays,
Tender tunes of bygone days;
Let them quaver, fall and rise
Through the faintly star-set skies,
Echoing the bells that chime
In the ivy towers of Time.

Bring the lute at vespertide,
Lo, a Spirit by our side,
Crowned with mingled rose and rue,
Dim with dusk and damp with dew —
Memory! Oh, sing, and so
We will restward gently go,
Drifting down Sleep's silver streams
To the peaceful Port of Dreams.

[56]

A Little Love-Song

My heart, my heart 's a bonny bird
That carols songs the sweetest heard;
My heart, my heart 's a fountain fair
That sparkles in the golden air;
My heart 's a rosy-raptured rhyme
That echoes to the glad Spring-time.

My heart, my heart 's a bud a-bloom
That lights with love a greenwood gloom;
My heart, my heart 's a silver star
That throws its beams afar, afar;
My heart 's a canticle divine —
And all because your heart is mine!

[57]

When You Come Home

What golden suns will gild the happy skies,
What incense from the meadow altars rise,
What hymns fill all the groves with glad surprise—
When you come home!

How Memory-bells will softly ring and rhyme
Amid the dear old ivied towers of Time,
As arm in arm we listen to their chime —
When you come home!

At Joy's bright festal board shall we sit down,
And Mirth and Music, each with myrtle crown,
Will drive away the tear, the sigh, the frown —
When you come home!

Suspense will quickly change to calm content,
Desire with rare fulfilment will be blent,
And meeting be one long, sweet sacrament —
When you come home!

[58]

Angel Lore

Great was his joy and great his glad surprise,
When to a Seraph, new in Paradise,

Sandalphon beckoned, and into his ear
Spoke thus, in measure sweet and calm and clear:

"From one far world where never yet was heard
The speech of man or sea or wind or bird,

A voiceless earth, an orb in toneless air —
From that sad people there has come a prayer,

A prayer so simple and yet so profound —
A pleading for the blessed gift of sound!

An answer to that plea I now confer,
And thee I choose as its interpreter!"

The Angel wept and low obeisance made,
Sandalphon's hand upon his head was laid —

"Fly to that star, on pinions fresh and strong,
And slay that virgin silence with a song!"

The Angel rose, and, smiling through his tears,
Went singing down the pathway of the Spheres.

[59]

Lay

If I were to send thee roses,
They would wither and decay,
Beauty not for long reposes
From her bower torn away.

Or perchance if I should send thee
In a golden cage a dove,
Mute might be its song, nor lend thee
E'en an echo of my love.

So instead of bird or flower
I would send a simple lay —
Let it charm thy brightest hour
And bedeck thy darkest day.

[60]

A Pilgrim Song

Sandal-shoon and scallop-shell,
Tell me, where does Fancy dwell?
  Up the pathway of the moon,
Or adown the dewy dell
Wherein Puck and Ariel
  Dance a merry rigadoon?
Come, you know the spot full well,
Sandal-shoon and scallop-shell!

Scallop-shell and sandal-shoon,
Is it o'er yon dim lagoon?
  Or in haunts of shy gazelle,
Where the starlit waters croon,
And the lilies sway and swoon
  To the voice of Philomel?
Oh, but bring me thither soon,
Scallop-shell and sandal-shoon!

Sandal-shoon and scallop-shell,
Listen, 't is the vesper bell!
  Ever since the hour of noon
I have waited for that knell;
Come, be gracious, and dispel
  Daylight's doubt, and grant the boon
That we couch in Fancy's cell —
Sandal-shoon and scallop-shell!

[61]

In a Mission Garden

(*Santa Barbara*)

Stand here, and watch the wondrous birth of Dreams
From out the Gate of Silence. Time and Tide,
With fingers on their lips, forever bide
In large-eyed wonderment, where Thoughts and Themes
Of days long flown pass down the slumbrous streams
To ports of Poet-land and Song-land. Side
By side the many-colored Visions glide,
And leave a wake where Fancy glows and gleams.

And then the bells! One stands with low-bowed head
While list'ning to their silver tongues recite
The sweet tale of the Angelus — there slips
A white dove low across the tiling red —
And as we breathe a whispered, fond "Good night,"
A "*Pax Vobiscum*" parts the *Padre's* lips.

[62]

In a Pergola

Far in the west the glory of the day
  Fades o'er a redwood forest banked by hills
  Wherein a fairy sisterhood distils
The dew of dreams in valleys twilight-gray.
Come, dew of dreams, drift hitherward we pray,
  Sweet anodyne for grief and kindred ills,
  A benediction on the dusk that fills
This garden where dim ghosts of memory stray.

Through paths of poppy, palm and eglantine
  They move in long processional and slow,
    With smile and nod and kissing of their hands,
Then disappear in one long, sinuous line
  Where through the purple of the afterglow
    A white star beckons toward elysian lands.

[63]

A Legend of the Madonna

Out of holy Bethlehem
  Into Egypt flying,
Herod's hate pursuing them,
  Dangers multiplying,
Hastened through the country wild
Joseph, Mary and The Child.

When some distance they had passed,
  Worn and weary growing,
Came they to a field at last
  Where a man was sowing
Seed of corn in fertile ground—
Mary's heart gave sudden bound,

To the husbandman she said:
  "If men bid you aid them,
Asking if this way we fled,
  With your tongue persuade them,
Saying: 'Yes, they passed at morn
On the day I sowed this corn.'"

Then, a miracle, behold!
  While the man was sleeping,
All the field was turned to gold
  Ready for the reaping,
Stalk and blade and ear were there
Gleaming in the sunlit air!

Came the men by Herod sent,
  Spied the man, and roughly
Riding through the corn, they went,
  Calling to him gruffly:
"Has an old man passed this way
With a wife and child?" "Come, say?"

And the man, o'er-whelmed with awe,
  Viewed his field and wondered . . .
"Yes," he said, "those three I saw."
  "How long since?" they thundered—
"When I sowed this corn"—and then,
Homeward rode King Herod's men.

[65]

A Song of Far and Near

When in hours relentless
  Far from thee I fare,
All the fields are scentless,
  All the boughs are bare;
Skies are lone, forsaken,
  Sailless is the sea,
Pain and grief awaken —
  Faring far from thee.

When in hours enravished
  Close by thee I bide,
Joy seems to have lavished
  All her charms world-wide;
Perfume, song and sweetness,
  Color and embrace
Blend in one completeness —
  Gazing on thy face!

[66]

How Steep the Stairs!

How steep the stairs that lead to fame —
How steep the stairs!
To pilgrims weary, heart-sick, lame,
Who journey toward that distant flame
Where glisten glory, power, name,
How steep the stairs!

How steep the stairs that lead to love —
How steep the stairs!
That slender ladder fashioned of
The purity of altar-dove,
That leads to highest heaven above —
How steep the stairs!

How steep the stairs that lead to God —
How steep the stairs!
For seeds that strive to pierce the sod,
For children smarting 'neath the rod,
For feet with sin and sorrow shod,
How steep the stairs!

[67]

Dream Chimes

Somewhere along the road that I am climbing
I know that bells are ringing blithe and sweet;
I hear them in my dreams so gently chiming,
And hasten on with glad, expectant feet.

I wonder are they set within a steeple,
Or are they hung beside a palace gate?
And will they ring for crowds of kindred people,
Or just for me alone, and soon, or late?

In day-dreams, too, I hear them faintly, faintly,
As if a fairy bevy rang the chimes;
And down into my heart they steal so quaintly,
And weave their melodies into my rhymes.

Sometimes they play a measure so alluring,
Of laurel and wild olive crown I dream;
I wake — the dusty road! New faith procuring,
I follow, as Sir Galahad the gleam!

Perhaps they sound across a valley vernal,
Perchance far up a rugged mountainside;
Ofttimes they ring with rapture so supernal
It seems as if in heaven they must abide!

Sometime, somewhere, I know that I shall meet them
And plainly hear them play the dear, old themes;
And with what joy my swelling soul will greet them —
Those bells of hope that chime adown my dreams!

[68]

Rosemary

The day is fair with golden glow, song stirs the brooklet's lip,
And down the leafy avenues gay swallows dart and dip;
A balmy odor scents the air, soft winds low-laden bring
The breath of violets — and yet, one cannot help remembering!

The lamps are lit, the blazing fire paints fancies on the floor,
Close by the hearth I sit and hold a book of poet-lore;
I part the curtains, peaceful stars their benediction bring,
Across the sea the moon — and yet, one cannot help remembering!

[69]

The Praise of Hope

Believe me, truly 't was not I
  Who sang that Hope did ever seem
  Like saddest singing in a dream —
Believe me, truly 't was not I,
Because for me the song of Hope
  Is bright as harp tones of Apollo;
I hear it up life's laureled slope:
  "Oh, follow, follow, follow!"

Believe me, truly 't was not I
  Who sang that Hope did ever seem
  Like faded flowers in a dream —
Believe me, truly 't was not I,
Because for me the flower of Hope
  Blooms on each hill and down each hollow,
And lured by fragrance up life's slope
  I follow, follow, follow!

[70]

The Evening Star

Whene'er I see the evening star
  My thoughts fly far away to you—
Thank God, there is no ban or bar
  To what a loving thought may do,
Though hands and lips must oft forego
The dear delights that lure them so!

Whene'er the evening star appears
  Before my raptured sight,
A veil falls from mine eyes and ears,
  I see and hear aright;
Thank God for memory that brings
Close to the heart the dearest things!

The evening star—I cannot tell
  Wherein its magic lies;
Thank God, it nightly deigns to dwell
  Within these lonesome skies;
And ever may the fair star be
A mizpah-light for you and me!

[71]

The Willow Stream

A wondrous wealth of flower and fern,
Sequestered nooks at every turn,
And pools with tiny caves and dens
Enfolding timid citizens;
A stream from out whose ports of gloom
Float argosies of lotus bloom,
And arched with trees whose branches wide
Drop melodies adown the tide —
The tuneful branches whereupon
Were hung the harps of Babylon!

Today these willow boughs are hung
With instruments more deftly strung —
The fairy viol, lyre and lute,
The elfin horn and fife and flute,
And sweeter still the pipes of Pan
Soft pressed by lips Eolian —
An orchestra that seems to be
In league with gay Terpsichore
To which the leaves all afternoon
Are dancing reel and rigadoon.

Beside the willow-bowered stream
How soon come dusk and dew and dream!
Through interwoven shine and shade
I hear a night bird's serenade;
A note falls on a ripple's breast
So gently soothing it to rest;

And lo, the Lady Moon in white
Draws back the curtain of the night,
And with a kiss awakes a star —
How still the stream and willows are!

[73]

A Rainbow Fancy

A seven-fold psalm of rapture spread along Heaven's
vaulted aisle,
And all because a Tear had told its sorrow to a
Smile.

[74]

Water, Leaf and Wing

Tell me of a fairer thing
Than the water, leaf and wing
Unbound in the early spring!

Water from the springs that sleep
In the hillsides dark and deep,
Singing in its silver flight
Down the Valley of Delight.

Leaf that lifts an emerald eye
To the turquoise-tinted sky,
Hearkening that it may hear
Flora's footfall drawing near.

Wing of butterfly and bird,
Air with rainbow colors blurred,
Wing of dragonfly and bee
O'er the honey-laden lea —

Tell me of a fairer thing
Than the water, leaf and wing
Unbound in the early spring!

[75]

A Rhyme Rose

I fain would send thee dew-wet flowers — too far
apart we bide,
Thou on the strand that greets the dawn, I by the
sundown tide;
So, up the ladder of my dreams a Romeo, I climb
And to thy open casement bear a little rose of rhyme.

Its petals gleam, its inmost heart a scent divine
exhales —
It bloomed within a bower hung with nests of
nightingales!
But oh, to wed it to thy lute, and some sweet vesper-
time
To tell thee all the rapture of this little rose of
rhyme!

[76]

Via Crucis

The vision of dawn is leisure,
But the truth of day is toil.

The sun comes up like a great, red rose,
The perfume over the wide world blows,
And, oh, to walk in the pathways fair
With the rose-trimmed beds and scented air,
And far at the garden's end a nook
With You and a poet's dream-set book!

The sun goes down like a great red fire,
And dies in ashes of vain desire,
For my pathway lay outside the wall
That girdled You and the roses tall,
And my footprints show a deeper red
And a crown of thorn is on my head!

Yet the vision stays with me all day,
Sweet solace along the rough highway,
Till the nails of Toil and spear of Want,
Grief's bitter cup and the jeer and taunt
Are touched by Sleep, and You softly glide
Where I, with the dream, am crucified!

[77]

A Day of Days

Within the calendar of life
  Of every human heart,
There shines a day with beauty rife,
  That stands alone, apart —
Distinct from other times and tides,
  The sorrowful or gay,
With Memory it ever bides,
  A rose-crowned, perfect day.

No matter if fast fades the gold
  Of other morns to gray,
And angel hands may not have rolled
  The stone of grief away —
Bright shining through life's fond regret,
  Through cloud and tearful haze,
Love's golden sun has never set
  Upon that day of days.

[78]

The Golden Age

The golden age of golden dream —
  Oh, for the laureled brow
When music laded every stream
  And burdened every bough!

The golden age of golden rhyme —
  Oh, for the tongue of flames
When poesy was in its prime
  And nightingales had names!

The golden age of golden lyre —
  Oh, for the subtle string
When love was wooed by heart's desire
  And song first heard of spring!

The golden age! The golden source
  Whence dew of thought had birth —
Turn, cycles, in your heavenly course
  And bring it back to earth!

[79]

Afternoon Callers

The summer leaves were overheard to say:
"My! What a dreary, dull and stupid day!"
(Enter Sir Whiff, Prince Zephyr, Baron Breeze,)
My! What a merry chatter in the trees!

[80]

A California Psalm

I lifted up mine eyes unto the hills
  Where fair Los Gatos like a lovely gem
  Is set in California's diadem;
The sky was wreathed with sunset daffodils,
And honey-dew that twilight hour distils
  Lay on the poppy fields and wet the hem
  Of Evening's robe, who softly sang to them
A slumber song of Dreamland vales and rills.
Unto the hills I lifted up mine eyes
  As one who seeks some guerdon or reward,
    And lo! into my heart of hearts there crept
The grateful balm that weary mortals prize —
  The help that cometh even from the Lord,—
    And, gazing long, I ceased to gaze, and slept.

[81]

The Things That Count

Not what we have, but what we use;
Not what we see, but what we choose —
These are the things that mar or bless
The sum of human happiness.

The things near by, not things afar;
Not what we seem, but what we are —
These are the things that make or break,
That give the heart its joy or ache.

Not what seems fair, but what is true;
Not what we dream, but good we do —
These are the things that shine like gems,
Like stars, in Fortune's diadems.

Not as we take, but as we give;
Not as we pray, but as we live —
These are the things that make for peace,
Both now and after Time shall cease.

[82]

The Language of Love

A speech defying all the arts and crafts of tongue
or pen,
And yet the universal speech of angels and of men.

The Singing Wind

Today the singing wind blows straight
From o'er pacific seas;
It wafts a boat with precious freight,
This wonder-laden breeze —
A shallop whose white wings enfold
Dim dreams of argonauts and gold!

Today the singing wind floats by
In blue and gold and green,
Turquoise of California sky,
The poppy's yellow sheen,
The redwood's tinge, hope's hue divine,
That decks these natal groves of mine!

Today the singing wind is fraught
With scent of inner shrines,
The incense of a fair love-thought
That round heaven's lattice twines —
Oh, singing wind, my soul you stir
With perfumed memories of Her!

She, whom to know was raptured bliss,
To lose was sorrow sore —
Oh, mother mine, I feel thy kiss,
I feel thine arms once more!
See, singing wind, how thy blest art
Has waked the lute-strings of my heart!

[84]

An Old Guitar

I picked it up in northern Spain,
This "Relic of the rosy reign
Of Francis First or Charlemagne."
(So read the sign.)
In woeful, stringless dishabille
It made such fervent, mute appeal
That on the spot I closed the deal
That made it mine.

It does not very kindly take
To these six strings of modern make,
And yet it is not hard to wake
Its voice to song,
The voice, perchance, that helped to seal
The fate of fair Blanche of Castile
When Thibault with designing zeal
Sang low and long.

This tracery of tortoise shell
If it could speak might softly tell
How many bosoms rose and fell
With questionings;
These ivory keys recall the touch
Of fingers trembling over much
Because of Master Cupid's clutch
At other strings!

It may be that some swarthy Moor
Or gentle, love-sick Troubadour

Oft used these frets to reassure
His lady fair;
Immortal Villon may, perchance,
Have strummed the strings to gay romance,
Some neat *ballade* of ancient France,
Light, *débonnaire.*

I joy to think that Blondel may
Have borne it on his weary way
When through long night and lonely day
By mead and brine,
He sought his long-imprisoned king—
How throbbed with mighty joy each string
When lo, at last he heard him sing
At Dürrenstein!

And now, here in my studio,
It breathes of that sweet Long Ago
When Beranger, Ronsard, Marot,
Clemence Isaure * * *
With *lai* and *chaunt* beloved so well
Wove wreaths of fadeless asphodel,
And garlanded with magic spell
Their deathless lore.

[86]

The Unseen Ships

Through seas more vast than those of earth,
  Blown straight by heavenly wind,
They sail with freight of priceless worth,
  These merchantmen of mind.

In alien zones, through sun and cloud,
  With varied cargoes fraught,
What intercourse and traffic crowd
  The argosies of thought!

Oh, happy they who walk the strand
  Whereon those billows roll
Whose ports by right divine command
  The commerce of the soul.

[87]

At Sunset

Over the tired world blows
Breath of the sunset rose;

Wind in the redwood trees
Swept from the sundown seas;

Gleam on the hilltop high
Caught from a jeweled sky;

Dusk in the canyon deep
Shed from the wing of Sleep;

Prayer in a censer swung,
Incense from heart and tongue,

Dreams in a purple boat
Sailing from ports remote;

"Peace!" from a seraph fair
Floating through twilight air.

Over the tired world blows
Rest from the sunset rose.

[88]

A Wedding Song

Hang the walls with branch and vine,
Rifle glen and glade,
Roses, do your best to shine,
Lilies, lend your aid;
Let the toast be gaily quaffed,
Raise the potion high,
Drop good wishes in the draught,
Drain the chalice dry.

Strike the strings and let us hear
Mingle lute and lip,
Up, ye minstrels, loud and clear
Laud sweet fellowship;
Wherefore all this glad array?
Oh, for very joy!
Cupid is our guest today,
Bless the precious boy!

[89]

Chansonnette

The joys that we have missed —
The broken tryst,
The friends we never knew,
The harp and lute unstrung,
The songs unsung —
A little toast to you!

The joys that we have missed —
The lips unkissed,
The dreams that ne'er came true,
The home-bound ships that sleep
In havens deep —
A little toast to you!

The joys that we have missed —
Life's unground grist,
Hopes unfulfilled — a few!
The days and nights unwreathed,
The love unbreathed —
A little toast to you!

[90]

The Silhouette City

(*San Francisco*)

Against a sky of rose and violet
The city's outline clearly, sharply shows
Against a sky of violet and rose
The shapes of turret, tower and minaret;
Twin Peaks, high hills in dream-repose are set,
Around whose heads the poppy-zephyr blows,
Twin Peaks, high hills are set in dream-repose
Where Occident and Orient have met.

And now the skies have turned to gold and green,
Rare jewels blaze on steeple, spire and dome —
Far, far across the deck's low rail I lean
And throw a kiss to thee, my natal home!
Dream City! Pilgrim hearts alone can prize
Such precious balm for weary, homesick eyes!

A Signal at Sea

"And there was no more sea"! O Love,
  Let this our grief beguile,
An olive spray borne by a dove
  From far-off sacred isle,
Now wafted through Fate's iron bars
  O'er seas that roll between
Two ships that sail 'neath alien stars
  In search of port serene.

Tonight while tears more thickly blind
  The lonely course I steer,
I fling this message to the wind
  That haply you may hear —
O Love, though joy be in eclipse,
  What hope for you and me
In that divine apocalypse:
  "And there was no more sea"!

ROBERTSON

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